The elder brother of the Prince Consort, though never a familiar figure in England, played a considerable part in the making of Germany and spent his closing years in recording his experiences. The three stout volumes of the Memoirs of Ernst n, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, published 1887-9 (an English translation in four volumes appeared 1888-1890) are the only autobiography of a German ruling prince between Frederick the Great and William U. The first suggestion that he should write came from Radowitz in the early 'fifties, and in 1881 Ottokar Lorenz, the distinguished Austrian historian of German unification, began to help with the arrangement of the material. The book was sharply criticised, chiefly on the ground that the- author exaggerates his influence, but it contains valu- able documents and much first hand observation. As the nephew of King Leopold of Belgium, cousin and brother-in- law of Queen Victoria,, *persona grata* at Paris, Vienna and Berlin, Ernst knew everything that was going on. Traveller, author, composer, soldier, he touched life at many points.

No German ruler of his generation was more anxious for German unity* His life-long friend Gustav Freytag urged him in 1856 to become "the adviser and General of the good Prussian cause," but the Duke was ready to accept aid from any quarter for the realisation of his aims. While Freytag was a Prussian, the Duke was a German nationalist. He preferred a Prussian lead, and regretted the refusal of Frederick William IV to accept the offer of the Imperial crown from the Frankfurt Parliament, but he supported the attempt of Francis Joseph to reform the German Confederation at the Conference of Princes at Frankfurt in 1863. Till 1866 there was no love lost between him and Bismarck, but in that year of

decision,he placed his troops at the disposal of Prussia. When the time came to write his Memoirs tendentious omissions toned down his opposition to Prussia in the years before the stricken field of Sadowa destroyed the *Grossdeutsch* parry.

The Duke was the first reigning prince to visit Napoleon ni,and the records of his conversations in i854and subsequent years with the Emperor are the most interesting in the book. He assures us again and again that Louis Napoleon was far above the average and not specifically French. He' combined outstanding abilities with big plans, yet there was something of the dreamer and the doctrinaire* With his faultless German and his quotations from Schiller he sometimes reminded his visitor of a German savant. In the 'fifties at any rate he was